

PART II

Population

Where Washington's People Live.

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling, glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlement occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present State of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capital in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capital at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at that time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe, who took up lumbering, fishing, mining and agriculture. Ranked numerically, according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

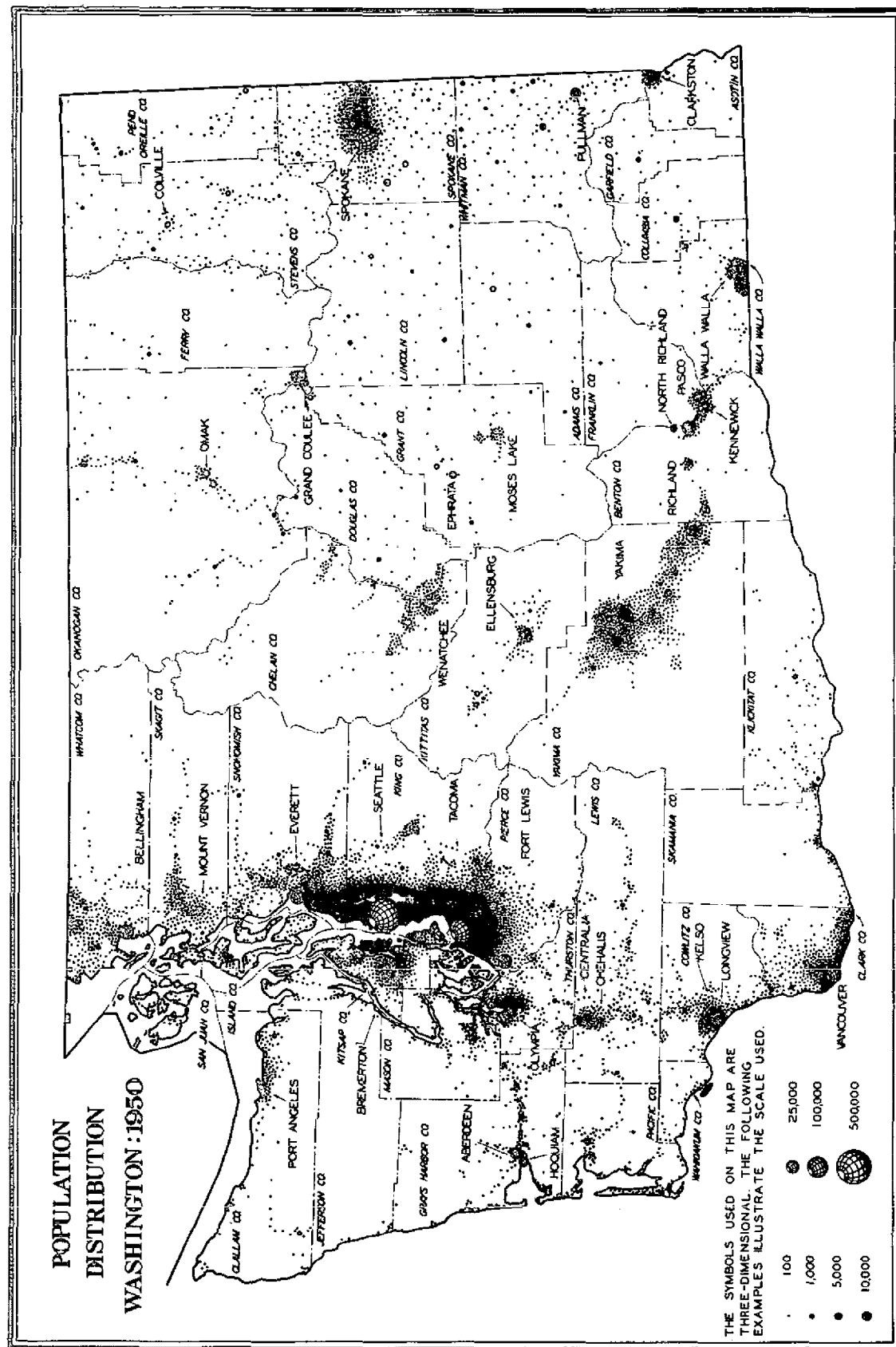
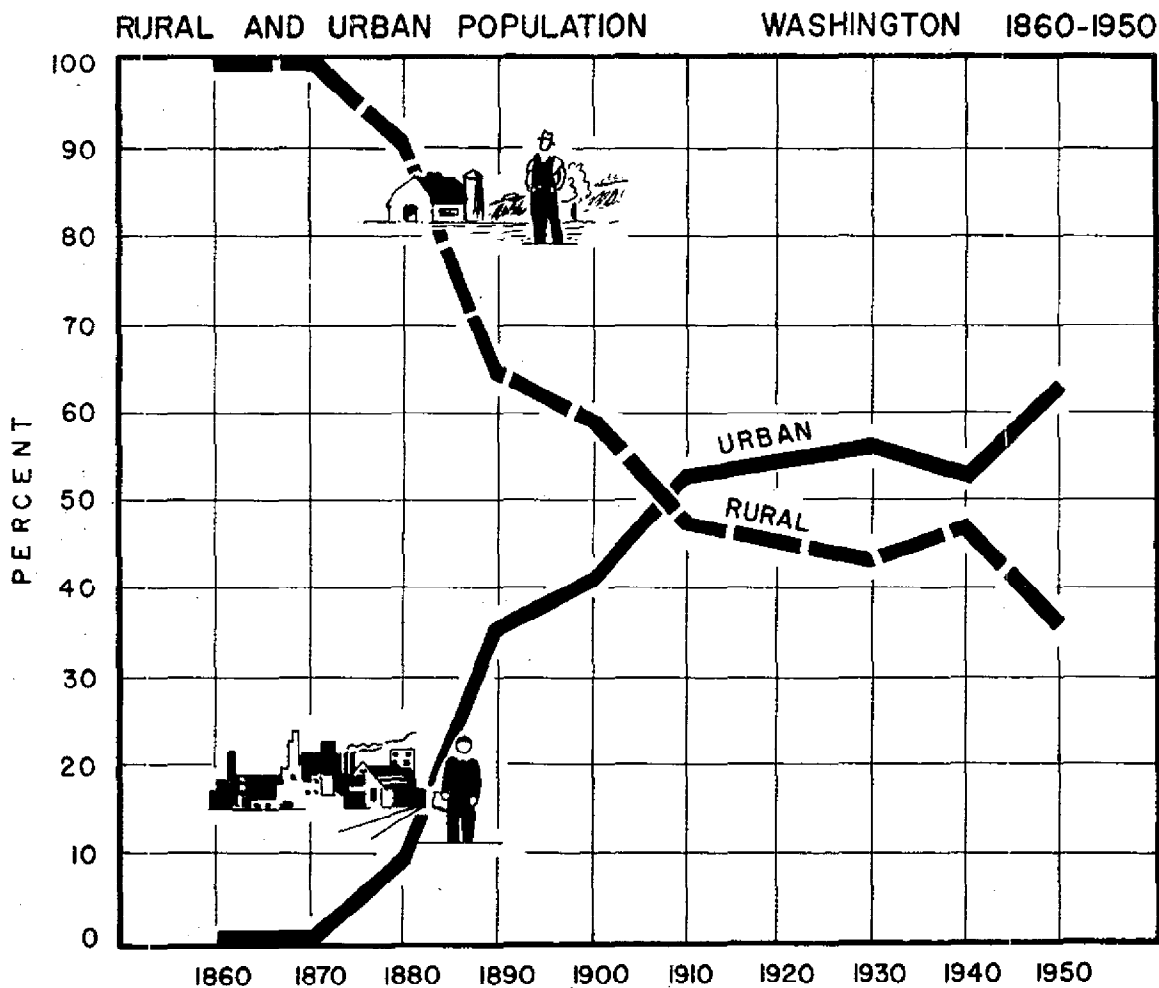
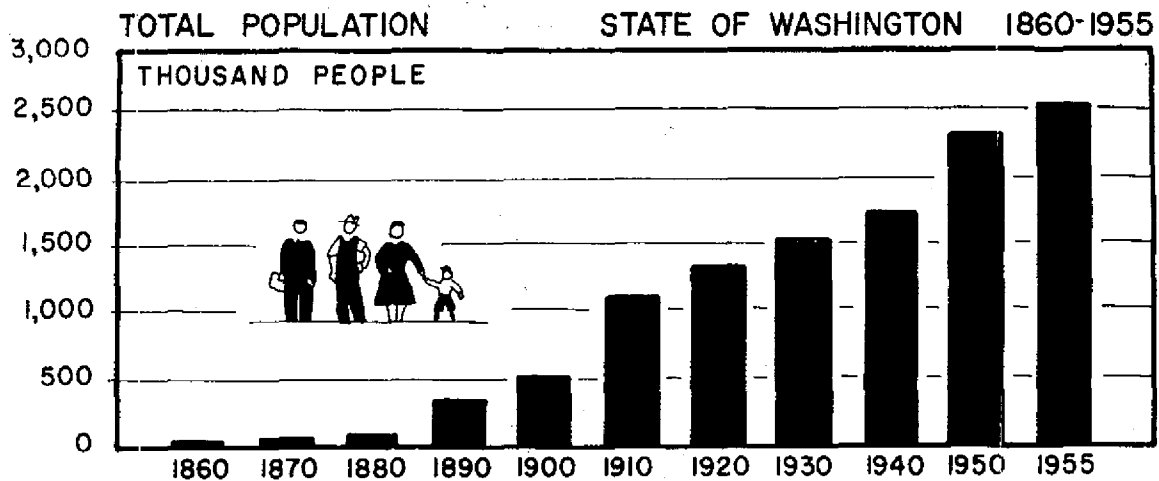


Figure 6.- DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WASHINGTON, 1950 (Map by courtesy of Population Research Office, Washington State Census Board).



SOURCES OF DATA: U.S. Census 1860-1950; Washington State Census Board, Estimate - 1955

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The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lives in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.- Population of Washington
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,141,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;
Washington State Census
Board, April 1, 1955
Estimate.

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

Population of Asotin County

In 1955 Asotin County was estimated to have a population of 12,000, ranking twenty-ninth among the thirty-nine Washington counties in this respect. Population has shown a steady increase with each Census since 1890, with a gain of almost 4,000 persons between 1940 and 1955. Most of the county's inhabitants live in its two incorporated cities--Clarkston and Asotin. Over one-half the population is urban, living in Clarkston, the largest city of the county. The county had a farm population of 1,175 according to the last United States Census. Although the population is primarily concentrated in the Snake River bottom land at Clarkston and the lower part of Asotin Creek Valley, the ratio

of persons to total area is small, only about 19 persons per square mile.

Table 2.- Population of Asotin County
1890-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1890	1,580	100	0
1900	3,366	100	0
1910	5,831	100	0
1920	6,539	100	0
1930	8,136	64.7	35.3
1940	8,365	62.8	37.2
1950	10,878	48.4	51.6
1955	12,000	47.5	52.5

Source: U.S. Census, Population

The growth of population has been associated mainly with the recent industrial and commercial development in the Clarkston, Washington and Lewiston, Idaho district on the Snake River. Lumbering, meat packing, feed milling and distribution of trade goods have expanded payrolls. Agriculture has been relatively stable in recent years with less people employed. Total population rose from 8,365 in 1940 to 12,000 in 1955 with lumber manufacture in Lewiston, Idaho a major factor in this growth. About 1,000 Asotin County residents are employed across the Snake River in Idaho. Potlatch Forests, Incorporated, manufacturing lumber and paper products at Lewiston, employ about 800 persons. Meat packing is another recently expanded activity related to agriculture.

Since the development and expansion of Clarkston, the majority of the county's population has become urban in residential and occupational characteristics. An urban place is a city or village of 2,500 or over. In 1930 only 35 percent was classified as urban. Clarkston grew from 2,870 in 1930 to 6,325 in 1955, making the county 52 percent urban. Asotin, county seat and agricultural center, has been relatively stable in population ranging between 700 and 800 persons during the last 50 years.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
Asotin County, 1910-1957

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1957 ^{1/}
Asotin	820	852	697	686	740	776
Clarkston	1,257	1,859	2,870	3,116	5,617	6,325

^{1/} Populations for 1957 are estimates of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1957.

Sources: U. S. Census, Population.
Washington State Census Board.

Typical of many counties in the western United States, Asotin County has been a melting pot of immigrants from many foreign lands. Free homesteads,

low land prices and the productivity of the land attracted immigrants from agricultural regions of midwestern United States, Canada and Europe. Near the end of the pioneer settlement period in 1890, about 11 percent of the population was foreign-born. By 1920 there were more immigrants but they were proportionately smaller in number compared with native-born persons.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Asotin County
1890, 1920 and 1950

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	21	35	44
Scotland.....	2	13	9
Northern Ireland.....	--	--	--
Ireland (Eire).....	14	18	11
Norway.....	4	51	33
Sweden.....	10	50	31
Denmark.....	--	10	8
Netherlands.....	1	2	4
Switzerland.....	3	10	--
France.....	--	8	4
Germany.....	74	84	48
Poland.....	--	1	3
Czechoslovakia.....	--	--	2
Austria.....	--	18	11
Yugoslavia.....	--	--	2
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	--	--	14
Finland.....	--	5	73
Italy.....	--	2	7
Canada-French.....	--	4	6
Canada-Other.....	34	79	132
All other countries...	3	13	26
Totals	166	411	468
Percent foreign-born	10.5	6.3	4.3

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Immigration decreased sharply after 1924 under a restrictive quota system established by Congress and by 1950 the proportion became smaller. Important in agriculture and the largest groups of foreign immigrants were persons from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Canada and the British Isles.

Agriculture is the fourth ranking field of gainful employment. Asotin County population is primarily employed in manufacturing and commercial occupations. This pattern results from the larger number of persons employed in lumber manufacture and in retail and wholesale stores at Clarkston, Asotin and Lewiston. Miscellaneous services and trades serving a trade area in the Snake River and Clearwater River Valley areas of southeastern Washington and central Idaho also are important. Employment and the county economy are diversified with lumbering as the most basic primary industry followed by agriculture. These two basic industries support the service and commercial fields of employment. Four major fields of wage earning in 1950 were retailing and wholesaling (21 percent), miscellaneous services (21 percent), manufacturing of

lumber and processed foods (20 percent) and agriculture (13 percent).

Table 5.- Employment of the Population
Asotin County, 1950

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	2,815	878	3,693	100.0
Agriculture.....	450	18	468	12.7
Forestry and fisheries.....	2	--	2	.4
Mining.....	20	--	20	
Construction.....	408	7	415	11.1
Manufacturing.....	673	57	730	19.8
Transportation.....	157	16	173	4.7
Retail and wholesale stores.....	504	283	787	21.3
Miscellaneous services.....	398	379	777	21.3
Public administration (government employment).....	78	29	107	2.9
Other employment.....	125	89	214	5.8

Source: U. S. Census, Population

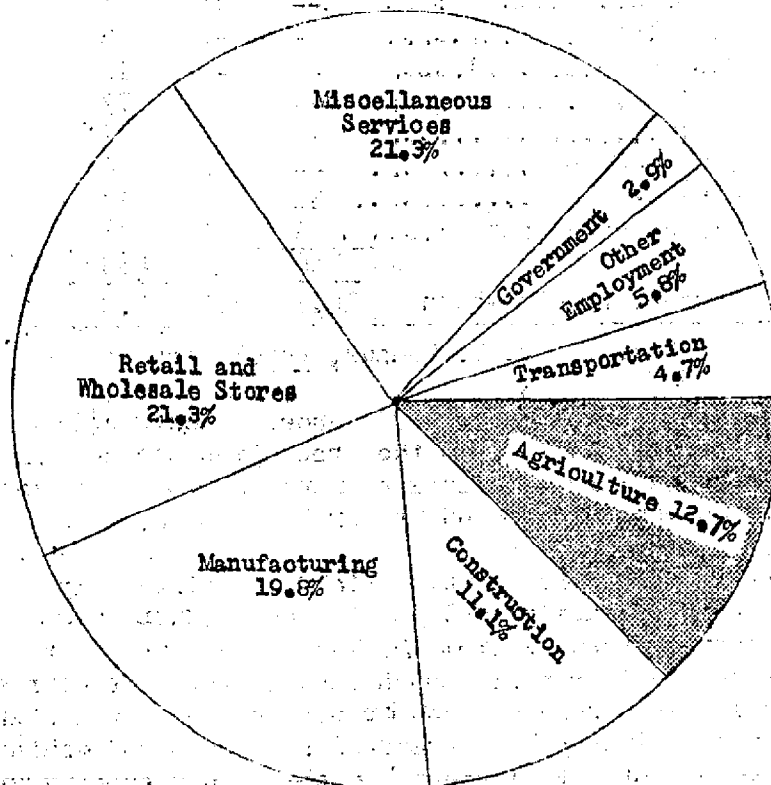


Figure 3.- Agricultural Employment Compared With Other
Employment in Asotin County, 1950
(Based on U.S. Census of Population, 1950)